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## A study on mass media exposure and child discrimination among rural and tribal areas of Telangana state

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### Abstract

Women are the backbone of healthy and progressive family. Hence coordinated and convergent efforts are needed to ensure survival, protection and empowerment of the girl child; Government has announced Beti Bachao Beti Padhao initiative and is being implemented through a national campaign (GOI, 2015). The present study was conducted to see the Child Discrimination among women of rural and tribal areas of Telangana state. Exploratory research design was adopted for the study and Purposive random sampling was done for selection of respondents. A total of 120 samples were taken for the study, 60 from rural area of Gadwal district and 60 from tribal area of Nagar Kurnool district. The findings showed that majority of the respondents (80.83%) were illiterates, 69.17% of the respondents had medium level of Girl child Discrimination followed by high level discrimination (29.17%). Majority of rural and tribal women (94.17%) had low mass media exposure followed by very few (5.83%) with medium and high exposure. There was a significant association (0.291\*\*) between the mass media exposure and Child discrimination in rural and tribal areas. They require a wide range of programmes in mass media specific to girl child discrimination and incentives to families with girl children at different stages of life.

**Keywords:** Rural and tribal women, mass media exposure, child discrimination

### Introduction

Gender Discrimination is the difference in treatment of people based entirely on there being male (or) female. In the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women gender discrimination was defined as "any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field".

Mass media is also playing a significant role in informing the public about the government policies and in reporting the reflections of the people on various aspects of the society. It is also being used as a tool to build the public opinion on important issues. The media play an even greater role in countries where women have low or no education, restricted freedom of movement, low levels of employment outside the home, or employment on the family farm. For men, too, the media are likely to be important, but perhaps less so than for women because men tend to have more alternative sources of information than do the women (i.e., they are more likely to be employed, educated, and able to move freely outside the home). Media exposure can be seen as a source of "empowerment" for women just as education. With this background kept in mind present study was undertaken with the objectives to study the profile characteristics of rural and tribal women and to know their mass media exposure levels and the association between mass media exposure and gender discrimination.

### Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in rural and tribal areas of Telangana state. Purposive random sampling was adopted for sample selection with criteria of families having at least one girl child. A total 120 sample, 60 sample from rural area, Ghattu mandal of Jogulamba Gadwal district and 60 sample from tribal area, Achampet mandal of Nagar Kurnool district. Data was collected with the help of Schedule developed by with suitable modifications was used. The specific objectives for the study are as under following heads.

**Objectives**

- To study the profile characteristics of rural and tribal women of Telangana state.
- To study the mass media exposure of rural and tribal women of Telangana state.
- To study the child discrimination among rural and tribal women of Telangana state.

- To study the association between mass media exposure and child discrimination of rural and tribal women of Telangana state.

**Results and Discussion**

- To study the profile characteristics of rural and tribal women of Telangana state

**Table 1:** Profile characteristics of rural and tribal women

S. No	Variable	Rural (n=60)		Tribal (n=60)		Total (n=120)	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	<b>Age</b>						
	20-30 years	31	51.66	21	35.00	52	43.33
	30-40 years	28	46.66	36	60.00	64	53.33
	40-50 years	1	1.66	3	5.00	4	3.33
2	<b>Educational Level</b>						
	Illiterate	44	73.33	53	88.33	97	80.83
	Primary School	2	3.33	2	3.33	4	3.33
	Middle School	7	11.67	1	1.67	8	6.67
	High School	6	10.00	2	3.33	8	6.67
	College Education	0	0.00	2	3.33	2	1.67
	Graduation & Above	1	1.67	0	0.00	1	0.83
3	<b>Occupation</b>						
	Agriculture	13	21.67	15	25.00	28	23.33
	Landless labour	26	43.33	20	33.33	46	38.33
	Small business	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
	Government Job	3	5.00	1	1.67	4	3.33
	Housewife	5	8.33	3	5.00	8	6.67
	Tailor	5	8.33	0	0.00	5	4.17
	Agriculture + Landless labour	8	13.33	21	35.00	29	24.17

The findings in the Table 1 reveal that, On the basis of chronological age, the respondents were classified into three categories namely Young (20-30 years), early middle age (30-40 years) and late middle age (40-50 years). It indicated that in rural village population, little more than half of the respondents (51.66%) belonged to young age followed by Early middle age (46.66%) and late middle age (1.66%). In Tribal village population, more than half of the respondents (60.00%) belonged to Early middle age followed by Young age (35.00%) and late middle age (5.00). Out of the total population majority of the respondents (53.33%) belonged to early middle age followed by young age (43.33%) and Late middle age (3.33%). The reasons for majority of the respondents belonged to young age main criteria for selection of the respondents should have atleast one girl child.

The educational level of the respondents who were classified into six categories namely illiterate, primary school, middle school, high school, college education, graduation & above. Further, the educational levels of the respondents in rural village population, majority of the respondents (73.33%) were illiterates followed by middle school education (11.67%), high school education (10.00%), primary school education (3.33%) and graduation & above (1.67%). In tribal village population, majority (88.33%) of the respondents were illiterates followed by primary school education (3.33%), high school education (3.33%), middle school education (1.67%) and graduation & above (0.00%).

Out of the total population majority of the respondents (80.83%) were illiterates followed by equal portion (6.67%) of middle school education and high school education, primary school education (3.33%), college education (1.67%) and graduation & above (0.83%). Overall majority of the respondents were illiterates due to the reason that schools were far from their village, safety and security aspects, lack of

sufficient money and parents attitude towards girl child education was not good.

And the results are coinciding with the results of Zarar *et al.* (2017) [6] studied causes and consequences of gender discrimination. The study pointed that Illiteracy is one of the prime causes of gender discrimination.

These results are in accordance with the results of wherein they stated that Tribal women literacy in Telangana in the year of 2011 is 62.08 in the district of Hyderabad which is highest percent. The lowest tribal women literacy percent was in district of Mahabubnagar (30.04) of Telangana.

On the basis of occupation, the respondents were classified into seven categories namely agriculture, landless labour, small business, government job, housewife, tailor and agriculture + landless labour.

It indicated that in rural population, majority (43.33%) of the respondents belonged to landless labour category followed by agriculture (21.67%), Agriculture + Agricultural labour (13.33%), equal portions of house wife (8.33%), tailor (8.33%), government job (5.00%) and Small business (0.00%). In tribal population, 35.00% of the respondents belonged to Agriculture + Landless labour followed by Landless labour (33.33%), agriculture (25.00%), housewife (5.00%) and government job (1.67%).

Out of the total respondents, 38.33 per cent were belonged to landless labour followed by agriculture + landless (24.17%), agriculture (23.33%), housewife (6.67%), tailor (4.17%) and government job (3.33%). Overall majority of the women's occupation identified as landless labour due to the reason that most of them were illiterates and depended on agricultural activities. NSS data for 2011–2012 showed that 64 percent of the rural workforce was engaged in agriculture and allied activities, yet half of the total manufacturing employment and 44 percent of the total services employment was in rural areas.

**Table 2:** Mass media exposure of respondents (n=120)

S. No	Mass media Exposure (Score)	Rural (n=60)		Tribal (n=60)		Total (n=120)	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Low level (0-12)	54	90.00	59	98.33	113	94.17
2.	Medium level (12-24)	5	8.33	1	1.67	6	5.00
3.	High level (24-36)	1	1.67	0	0.00	1	0.83
	Total	60	100.00	60	100.00	120	100.00

Table 2 indicates that in rural population, majority (90.00%) of the respondents were belonged to low category followed by medium category (8.33%) and high category (1.67%). In tribal population, majority (98.33%) of the respondents were of low category followed by medium category (1.67%) and high category (0.00%).

Regarding the extent of mass media exposure, 94.17 per cent of the respondents were belonged to low category followed by medium category (5.00%) and high category (0.83%). Overall majority of the women had low mass media exposure due to the reason that most of the time respondents were engaged in agriculture and labour activities which is curtailing them to get exposed to mass media. Majority of them being illiterates could not get exposed to the print media also.

This study was in accordance with the research conducted by

Bihari *et al* (2012) [5], on Role Performance and Knowledge Level of Tribal Women Farmers in Meghalaya. They revealed that women had low mass media exposure due to their farm activities.

Found in his study “Reach of media and interpersonal communication in rural Uttar Pradesh” that media has limited reach, covering only about 20 percent of the rural population of UP. It was found that print media reach was only 20% in western rural areas of UP. Further, it was noted that irrespective of gender, the reach of mass media is low among non-literate groups.

**To study the child discrimination among rural and tribal women of Telangana state**

**Table 3:** Distribution of respondents according to their Girl Child Discrimination (n=120)

S. No	Girl Child Discrimination	Rural (n=60)		Tribal (n=60)		Total (n=120)	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Low (0-8)	1	1.67	1	1.67	2	1.67
2.	Medium (8-16)	35	58.33	48	80.00	83	69.17
3.	High (16-24)	24	40.00	11	18.33	35	29.17
	Total	60	100.00	60	100.00	120	100.00

Table 2 indicates that on the basis of the score, respondents were classified into three categories namely low (0-12), medium (12-24) and high (24-36).

In rural, majority of the respondents had either medium (58.33%) or high level (40.00%) of Girl Child Discrimination. Whereas in tribal majority of the respondents (80.00%) had medium level of Girl Child Discrimination followed by high level (18.33%). Out of the total, majority of the respondents (69.17%) had medium level of Girl Child Discrimination followed by high level (29.17%). The reasons for girl child discrimination as expressed by the respondents were sons

carry their lineage (86.67 %), retain their property (79.17 %) and take care at old age (60.00 %).

Selvaraj *et al.* (2018) [2] identified the gender differentials among the children in rural Haryana and were mostly adverse for girls. Their study supported the present study in the aspects of existing evidence of poor quality of health care and lower health care investment provided to girl children.

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**Table 4:** Correlation analysis of independent variable – mass media exposure with dependent variable – Girl Child discrimination (n =120)

S. No	Independent variable	Rural (n = 60)	Tribal (n = 60)	Total (n = 120)
		Correlation coefficient (r) value	Correlation coefficient (r) value	Correlation coefficient (r) value
1.	Mass media exposure	0.262*	0.229NS	0.291**

\* = Significant at 0.05 level of probability

\*\* = Significant at 0.01 level of probability

NS = Non - Significant

**Table 3 Association between the mass media exposure and Child discrimination**

In order to study the association between the mass media exposure and Child discrimination, r values were computed and values were presented in table 3. The association between the mass media exposure and Child discrimination were tested by relevant null and empirical hypothesis.

Table 3 revealed there was a significant association between the mass media exposure and Child discrimination. There was a significant association between the mass media exposure (0.262\*) and Child discrimination in rural area. There was no significant association between the mass media exposure

(0.229NS) and Child discrimination in tribal area. There was a significant association between the mass media exposure (0.291\*\*) and Child discrimination in rural and tribal areas.

The reasons for the association of mass media exposure and girl child discrimination were due to low literacy levels and majority being engaged in agriculture and labour activities which was shortening them to get exposed to mass media and contributing to high discrimination of girl child among the total sample which was even more among rural families.

**Conclusion**

Improving their mass media exposure levels can therefore

presents a key opportunity to decrease their attitude of Child discrimination. Findings of this study showed that majority (53.33%) of the respondents were belonged to early middle age followed by young age (43.33%) and Late middle age (3.33%). The gender discrimination was high in tribal area, majority (80.00%) of the respondents are showing medium level of Child Discrimination followed by high level (18.33%) and low level (1.67%). Improving their mass media exposure levels can bring change in their attitude towards child discrimination how they are treating their girls. They require a wide range of programmes in mass media specific to girl child discrimination and incentives to families with girl children at different stages of life.

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